Conference on Disarmament

21 August 2015

Original: English

Letter dated 21 August 2015 from the President of the Conference on Disarmament and Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the Conference on Disarmament transmitting a letter from Latvia as the Coordinator of the Informal Group of Observer States, transmitting a working paper on enlargement

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter addressed to me in my capacity as President of the Conference on Disarmament from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Latvia as the Coordinator of the Informal Group of Observer States (IGOS), representing 39 observer States of the Conference, requesting me to circulate their working paper among the members of the Conference as an official document.

In this regard, I shall be grateful if the letter and the attached paper from the Coordinator of the Informal Group of Observer States entitled "Working paper on enlargement" be registered as an official document of the 2015 session of the Conference on Disarmament.

(*Signed*) Henk Cor van der Kwast
President
Conference on Disarmament
Permanent Representative of the Netherlands
to the Conference on Disarmament

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Please recycle

Geneva, 20 Aug 2015

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Latvia to the United Nations in Geneva presents its compliments to the President of the Conference on Disarmament, His Excellency Henk Cor van der Kwast, the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. The Republic of Latvia as the Coordinator of the Informal Group of Observer States (IGOS), representing 39 countries that are observers to the Conference on Disarmament, has the honour to present a working paper on enlargement, prepared by IGOS.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Latvia would like to kindly request the President of the Conference on Disarmament to circulate this working paper among the member States of the Conference as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

Informal Group of the Observer States (IGOS) to the Conference on Disarmament

Working Paper on Enlargement

1. All members of the Informal Group of Observer States (IGOS) attach great importance to the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral negotiating forum in the field of arms control and are strongly committed to advance global disarmament and non-proliferation goals.

2. Until 2015 a total of 39 States have expressed interest in participating in the work of the Conference. That is a sign of the continued importance that non-members attach to the work of the Conference;

3. The agenda of the Conference on Disarmament encompasses global concerns. The previously negotiated instruments in the Conference on Disarmament and its predecessor bodies impact the security of all States. We believe that matters of global importance must be addressed by a universally representative body. However, as recognized in the Conference on Disarmament document CD/1957 (put forward by Ireland in 2013) "The current reality is that membership of the Conference is not open to all States wishing to join [...]";

4. Membership of the Conference on Disarmament should be open to all States wishing to join in order to ensure universality, transparency, multilateralism and adherence to the rules of the forum, as the only currently universal element of the Conference is the financial cost of running the body, which is funded by all Member States of the United Nations.

5. Rule 2 of the rules of procedure of the Conference on Disarmament specifies, "The membership of the Conference will be reviewed at regular intervals". It is the view of the States of IGOS that the issue of membership is one of the core issues that member States have a responsibility to negotiate, and that it is now more than 15 years without action being taken on the issue of enlargement;

6. We believe that there is merit in identifying means how the Conference on Disarmament could engage more substantially with the States that wish to become members of the Conference. As a first step, in order to gather views of the members of the Conference, the position of Special Coordinator on Enlargement should be re-established and remain as a permanent position;

7. We would like to request the member States of the Conference on Disarmament to convene a formal discussion on enlargement in 2016. In order to contribute to the discussion on enlargement, we would like to propose following questions for consideration:

- - What is the notion of the "regular intervals"?
- - What would be an alternative for the position of Special Coordinator if this cannot be agreed upon?
- - What kind of study would help understanding the prospects for enlargement of the Conference on Disarmament?
- - The last report form Special Coordinator is from 2002, which we consider outdated. We would propose to renew the report.